

Chapter 19. Strandhill Village Plan

Strandhill is located 8 km to the west of Sligo Town, on the western extremity of the Coolera Peninsula. The Settlement Strategy designates Strandhill a **Satellite Village** of Sligo Regional Growth Centre (RGC).

The village is included in the area covered by the Sligo Local Transport Plan (LTP), which contains specific provisions relating to active travel.

Strandhill is also one of the designated settlements with **special coastal tourism functions**.

19.1 Village profile

The village underwent significant growth during the ‘Celtic Tiger’ years and much of the residential development took the form of suburban-type estates with only a small number of apartments.

Strandhill’s main employment sector is its tourism industry, created in part by its reputation as one of the top surfing destinations in Ireland and its picturesque location. Strandhill also has a range of unique assets which contribute to its attractiveness for enterprise and tourism.

Sligo Airport

County Sligo’s only airport is located in Strandhill, to the north of the village. The former Regional Airport operated internal and external commercial flights between 1983 and 2011. While no longer in use for scheduled flights, Sligo Airport continues to operate as the North-West base of the Irish Coast Guard S-92 Search & Rescue Helicopter.

National Surf Centre

The National Surf Centre in Strandhill, which opened in 2023 confirms Sligo’s reputation as a “must-visit” outdoor adventure destination along the Wild Atlantic Way and is an invaluable resource for the local surfing community and visitors.

Enterprise Centre

The Enterprise and Technology Centre, located beside the Airport, offers ready-to-go offices and fully-equipped meeting and training rooms. At the same location, the Strand Campus hosts a Digital Gaming Hub, the first in Ireland dedicated solely to supporting companies involved in gaming technologies.

Public realm

The popularity of Strandhill attracts increasing numbers of visitors who arrive mainly by car. As a consequence, the lower zone of the village (closer to the seafront Promenade), is dominated by vehicular traffic and car parking. Over time, the Council has sought to create a safe and pleasant space at the Promenade, providing more space for pedestrians.

Strandhill Golf Club

The Strandhill Golf Club includes an 18-hole links course, practice facilities and a substantial clubhouse. The Golf Club functions as a key community facility for the local area, but also as an important tourism asset for the region. **[PA-66]**

Strandhill village assets			
Population	2022 Census	1,982	+13% increase 2016-2022
	2016 Census	1,753	+9.8% increase 2011-2016
	2002-2022	+ 980 residents	+97.8% increase since 2002
Housing stock	2022 Census	874 dwellings, of which 64 holiday homes and 53 vacant	
	2016 Census	792 dwellings, of which 58 holiday homes and 37 vacant	
Service infrastructure	Water supply	Cairns Hill Water Reservoirs via Fox's Den WTP	
	Wastewater treatment	3,700 PE with spare capacity of approx. 1,299 PE	
	Road network	Served by the R-292 to Sligo Town	
Social infrastructure	Schools	One primary school	
	Churches	Two churches	
	Sports facilities	Soccer and rugby pitch, tennis courts and golf club. The Sligo GAA 'Centre of Excellence' at Scarden is located circa 3 km to the east of the village.	
	Other assets	Post office, creches, nursing home	
Sustainable transport	Train	Access to the Sligo-Dublin railway line at Mac Diarmada Train Station (Sligo, 8 km to the east)	
	Bus	Served by Bus Eireann route S2 and TFI Local Link	
	Active travel	No scheme in place at the time of writing (2023)	
Architectural heritage	Protected Structures	8, including Dolly's Cottage and The Cannon at the seafront	
	Buildings of Note	10 Buildings of Note	
Natural heritage and environment	Natura 2000 sites nearby	Ballysadare Bay SAC/SAP and Cummeen Strand/Drumcliff Bay SAC/SPA	
	Natural amenities	Strandhill Beach, Culleenamore Beach and the archaeologically significant Knocknarea	
	Flood risk	Present. Flood Zones A and B are mapped in Appendix 1 of the SFRA	

19.2 Housing and population allocations

The potential yield of lands zoned for housing in Strandhill amounts to circa **314 units** for the Plan period. The delivery of these dwellings would facilitate an increase of Strandhill’s population by at least **786 residents**. **The actual housing allocation is 120 units** as reflected in the aggregate figure for Satellite Villages indicated in the Core Strategy Table (refer to Chapter 3 in Vol. 1).

Section 19.2.1 below lists the sites designated to contribute to the compact growth of Strandhill, together with their potential housing and population yields.

Section 19.2.2 Supplementary zoning lists the sites which have been zoned as a result of amendments agreed by the Elected Members upon adoption of the Development Plan.

Section 19.2.3 includes a table showing the amount of land with residential potential zoned in this CDP (2024-2030).

19.2.1 Compact growth designations

A number of sites have been designated in Strandhill as **Settlement Consolidation Sites** as recommended in the *Development Plan Guidelines* (2022), in order to give effect to the NPF requirements for compact growth. A Regeneration Site has also been designated in accordance with Section 10(2)(h) of the Planning Act.

Regeneration site

There is only **one site designated for regeneration**. The neglected condition of the Ocean Wave Lodge has an adverse effect on the visual amenity and streetscape of Top Road. Its designation seeks to stimulate redevelopment and avoid further decay of the property.

Because there is no certainty regarding the potential housing yield of any redevelopment on this site, it has not been included in the Core Strategy housing allocation.

Table 19.1 Regeneration sites

REG – Regeneration site						
Site code	Location	Zoning (2024)	Site area (ha)	of which net residential	Potential housing yield	Potential no. of residents
REG-1	Site of Ocean Wave Lodge, Top Road	MIX	0.32	n/a	n/a	n/a

Settlement Consolidation Sites

Lands designated as SCS are zoned for residential (RES) or a mix of uses including residential (MIX). The potential housing yield of these lands has been calculated based on the following:

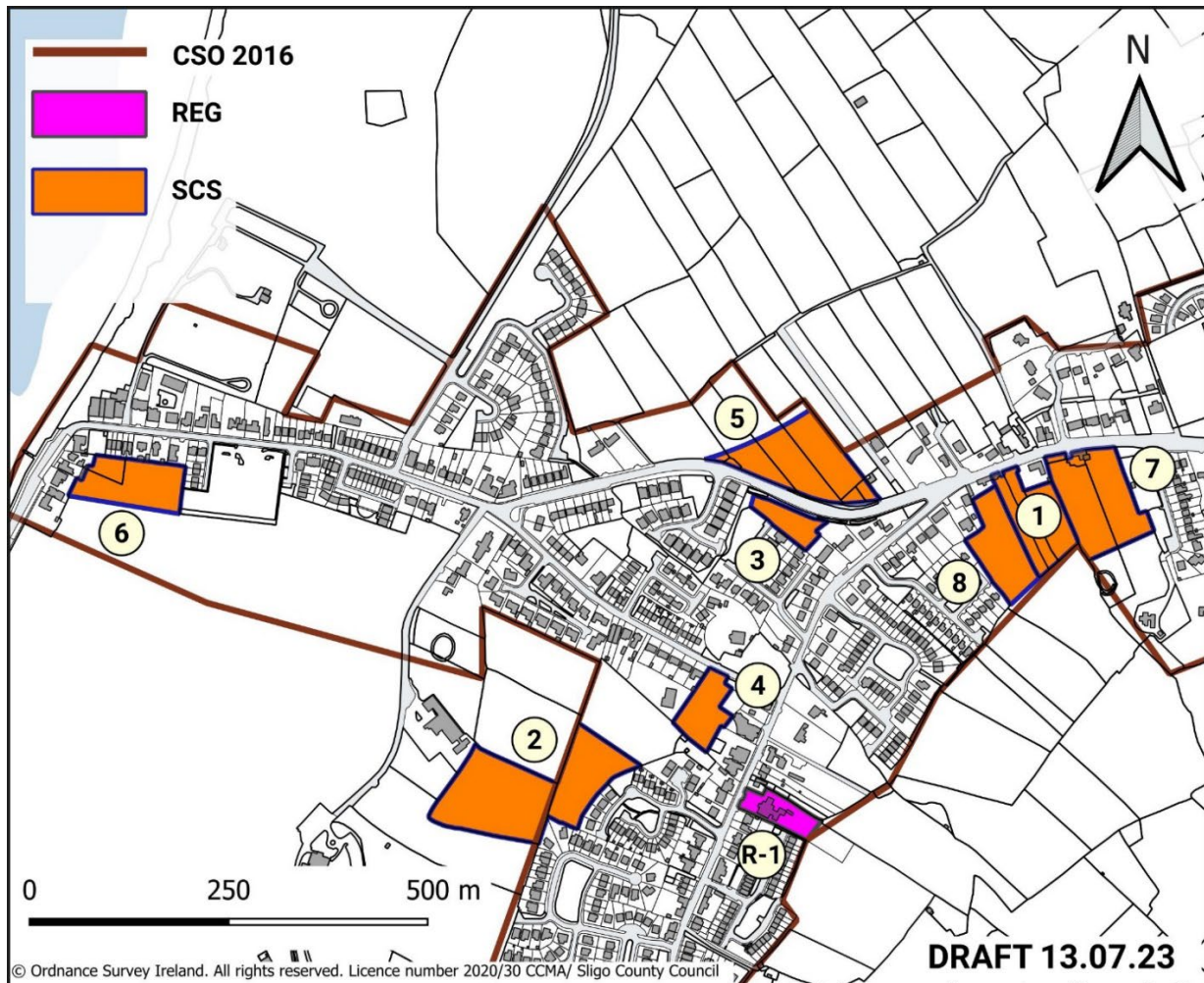
- a. the average residential density is 20 units per hectare, which is higher, but not excessive when compared with the density of existing housing estates in Strandhill;
- b. the Council-owned site (SCS-2) included in the Housing Delivery Action Plan 2022-2026 site has a predetermined allocation of 50 houses
- c. sites zoned RES are presumed to be developed exclusively for housing
- d. The residential component of sites zoned MIX is presumed to be circa 50%
- e. The average household size of future occupants of new housing is set at 2.5.

All SCS are located largely within the 2016 Census boundary, with a portion of SCS-2 located outside it. This means that at least 108 houses, i.e. **90% of the Core Strategy allocation**, can be delivered within the settlement’s built-up footprint, far in excess of the 30% requirement of RPO 3.2(c).

Table 19.2 Settlement Consolidation Sites

SCS - Settlement Consolidation Sites						
Site no.	Location	Zoning (2024)	Site area (ha)	of which net residential	Potential housing yield	Potential no. of residents
1	East of Roundabout on R-292	RES	0.74	0.74	15	37
2	HDAP site, Carrowbunnaun (Part 8 boundary)	RES	1.88	1.88	50	126
3	Site at Burma Road (south)	RES	0.27	0.27	5	13
4	Site at Buenos Ayres Drive	MIX	0.42	0.21	4	10
5	Site at Burma Road (north)	RES	1.18	1.18	24	60
6	Backland site between Main Car Park and Promenade	MIX	0.74	0.37	7	17
7	Site at the R-292 (south)	RES	1.15	1.15	23	57
8	Backland site south of the R-292	RES	0.66	0.66	13	32
Total			7.04	6.46	141	353

Fig. 19.A Compact growth designations in Strandhill: Regeneration sites (REG) and Settlement Consolidation Sites in the context of the 2016 Census settlement boundary (CSO) [this map will be updated in the final version of the Plan]



19.2.2 Supplementary Sites with housing potential

The **Development Plan Guidelines (2022), Section 4.4.3 Ensuring sufficient provision of housing lands/sites**, specify that in certain instances, a planning authority may “provide zoned residential sites in addition to those required to meet the settlement housing supply target”. The purpose of zoning additional lands is “to ensure sufficient choice for development potential”.

Excess zoned land (2024)

In accordance with the Guidelines, the Planning Authority may determine “the precise extent to which zoned lands and sites in excess of that required to match the agreed housing supply target are provided”.

Upon adopting the present CDP, the Elected Members have determined that **8.61 ha** of zoned housing land should be provided in addition to the **6.46 ha** with residential potential needed to deliver the housing supply target for Strandhill.

The **Supplementary Sites** are listed in **Table 19.4** below, which also indicates the zoning objective, area and potential housing yield of each site.

Table 19.3 Supplementary Sites with housing potential

Supplementary Sites						
Site no.	Location	Zoning	Site area (ha)	of which net residential	Potential housing yield	Potential no. of residents
PAZ-54	Lands located immediately north of the Golf Course	MIX	0.18	0.09	2	5
PAZ-56	Lands adjoining the Development Limit	nRES	0.64	0.64	13	33
PAZ-57	Lands to the east of Golf Club Road	nRES	4.02	4.02	80	200
PAZ-58	Lands to the north of Burma Road	nRES	3.78	3.78	76	190
PAZ-86	Lands located to rear of Ocean Wave Lodge, Top Road	MIX	0.15	0.08	2	5
Total			8.77	8.61	173	433

19.2.3 Summary of population, housing and land zoning requirements

The table below provides settlement-level information that has been aggregated in the main Core Strategy Table included in **Chapter 3 (Vol. 1)**.

The area in column 5 corresponds to the zoning in the CDP 2024-2030. It is the sum of the sites zoned RES and the residential portions of sites zoned MIX.

Table 19.4 Population, housing land and housing allocation for Strandhill

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Population 2022 and percentage of County population*	Population target 2030 and percentage of County population projection**	Housing allocation 2030 and percentage of County housing demand***	Minimum area required to deliver the housing allocation	Areas zoned RES and MIX (2024) (only lands with housing potential)	Potential housing yield of MIX and RES zoned lands (2024)	Excess zoned land (2024)
1,982 (2.82%)	2,100 (2.74%)	120 (2.98%)	6 ha	15.07	314	9.07

* County population 2022 = 70,198; ** County population projection = 76,560 (estimated from the NPF Implementation Roadmap plus additional Sligo Town population derived from RSES); *** Total adjusted housing demand = 4,029 units (calculated as per HSTM)

Notes on Table 19.4

- **Column 4** – the minimum area required to deliver the Core Strategy housing allocation at an average density of 20 units/ha.
- **Column 5** – the undeveloped lands taken into consideration are 100% of site areas in the case of RES (residential) zoning and 50% of site areas in the case of MIX zoning (a mix of uses including residential uses); lands zoned for residential or mixed-uses, which are designated as Regeneration Sites, are not included in these figures.
- **Column 6** – the sum of housing yield from the lands from the lands designated as Settlement Consolidation Sites and Supplementary Sites (refer to Tables 19.2 and 19.3).
- **Column 7** – the difference between the total amount of zoned land with housing potential (Column 5) and the minimum amount of land required to deliver the housing allocation (Column 4).

Strategic Land Reserve (SLR)

Within the built up area of Strandhill, there are three sites of long-term interest. Two of these have been included in the Strategic Land Reserve since 2013 and one has been in the SLR since 2017.

The three sites have potential for significant residential development to be delivered over a timescale greater than the six-year development plan period. These lands represent the Strategic Land Reserve (SLR) of Strandhill.

19.3 Village-specific objectives

Note: These objectives must be considered in conjunction with the urban development policies for towns and villages contained in **Chapter 10 Urban development principles** of this Volume (Vol. 2) and the general development policies and objectives set out in Volume 3 of this Plan.

19.3.1 Landscape, natural heritage, open space

- A. Prepare, in consultation with the DHLGH, a management plan for the Council-owned lands at Killaspugbrone.
- B. Apply the precautionary principle in relation to development proposals with potential to impact on the County Biodiversity Site within the green belt by requiring an ecological impact assessment to ensure that any proposed development will not affect the integrity and conservation value of the site.
- C. Retain and enhance public open space at the following locations:
 - i. the Sligo entrance to the village, between the new and old R-292, where a floral or shrub display might be developed, possibly in conjunction with a piece of public art.
 - ii. a strip of land to the east of the Airport Road, which would lend itself to a tree and shrub belt for amenity and shelter purposes.
- D. Require any development on the site of Seaview House on Upper Buenos Ayres Drive to retain and landscape a substantial element of open space at the eastern end of the existing garden.

19.3.2 Coastal protection

Coastal erosion is evident along the Strandhill coastline. The village itself and the wastewater treatment plant (WWTP) are well protected by rock armour revetments. Frequent maintenance of the revetment in front of the Promenade has held it in good stead. However, other intermediate areas along this particular shoreline have seen increasing erosion in recent years. This is especially evident along the sand dunes between the Promenade and the WWTP.

A 'Coastal erosion and flood risk management study' was prepared in 2024 for Strandhill. The report details the ongoing coastal erosion process and proposes two options for a coastal protection scheme. At time of writing (2024), the Office of Public Works (OPW) had not made a decision on Sligo County Council's application for funding to carry out the recommended works.

Until specific coastal protection measures are approved, the objectives listed below remain applicable

- A. Assist in the implementation of the recommendations of the Coastal Erosion and Flood Risk Management Study when completed.
- B. Prepare an integrated coastal management plan for Strandhill in consultation with relevant agencies and interested parties. This plan should address, inter alia, the existing and potential recreational uses of the area. The coastal management plan will ensure the protection of Natura 2000 sites through the Appropriate Assessment process.
- C. Retain a natural storm berm and dune buffer zone on the west side of the Strandhill caravan park, in the interests of safety. The natural buffer shall be at least 50 meters in width, as measured from the fore-dune ridge, and shall be maintained free from all new permanent structural development.
- D. Maintain and review dune management, to include, where necessary, appropriate fencing, boardwalks and public information boards in consultation with the National Parks and Wildlife Service.

19.3.3 Built heritage and streetscape

- A. Prepare a conservation report for Killaspugbrone Medieval Church and Graveyard, in partnership with the community, to inform future conservation works to the Church and graveyard, as resources allow.
- B. Ensure that the design of new developments along the Top Road (R-292) reflect the scale, character and finishes of existing vernacular buildings at this location.

19.3.4 Mixed-use zones

Shore Road and Promenade

- A. Support the upgrading and refurbishment of the Promenade and Shore Road to allocate more space for pedestrians, including informal play and seating areas along the sea front. Any proposal should include reduced carriageway widths and wider footpaths along Shore Road and the Promenade, along with a rationalisation of car parking spaces. Proposals should also include new landscaping and street furniture.

Promenade

- A. Encourage the upgrading of existing properties fronting onto the Promenade via appropriate design improvements and/or redevelopment.
- B. Encourage the redevelopment of the Promenade 'Corner' currently comprising shops, dwellings and a public open space.
- C. Require that any development proposed on the 'Promenade Corner' adheres to the following criteria:
 - i. all new build and redevelopment should be of high quality in terms of design and materials, recognising its importance for the streetscape at the 'gateway' to the promenade area;
 - ii. up to three storeys may be permitted, subject to satisfactory integration with adjoining developments;
 - iii. new development should incorporate an appropriate mix of tourism, commercial and residential uses, combined with adequate backland access and parking provision.

Buenos Aires Drive (SCS-6, the Main Car Park, and the mixed-use zone at the junction of Buenos Aires Drive and Burma Road)

- A. Permit terraced buildings up to three storeys in the mixed-use zone along Buenos Aires Drive, subject to appropriate 'feathering' and the creation of a strong building line extending towards the Promenade.
- B. Require that any development proposal on mixed-use lands between the Council car park and the Shore Front Surf Centre incorporates the following:
 - i. a pedestrian civic square, capable of being used for events and local markets;
 - ii. pedestrian linkages to the Promenade to the west, behind existing development;
 - iii. the location of any car parking behind the building line.
- C. Encourage any proposal which involves a change of use or redevelopment of an existing property at the Church junction (next to the existing retail unit) to include the upgrading of building façades, to reflect its highly visible position at this location.

Mixed-use site adjoining the R-292

- A. Require that any development proposal on the site to the south-west of the petrol/service station, between the old and the realigned R-292) incorporates the following:
 - i. protection and enhancement of the setting of Dolly's Cottage through appropriate scale and design of all proposed structures;
 - ii. where appropriate, new buildings should be dual aspect, with façades fronting both public roads. Their design shall reflect a common theme and be appropriately detailed for such a high-profile site.

19.3.5 Transport, circulation and parking

- A. Reserve land along Burma Road for a 'public transport node' / mobility hub, to include car and cycle parking facilities, bus stop etc.
- B. Upgrade the Golf Course Road (L-7507-0) and its junction with Buenos Aires Drive.
- C. Implement the following active travel measures recommended in the draft Sligo Local Transport Plan:
 - i. Upgrade existing cycle lanes along the R-292 and improve street lighting and signage along the route.
 - ii. Upgrade the existing Shore Road/R-277 junction in the village to include clear cycle paths.
- D. Support the implementation of traffic-related schemes within the village, including:
 - realignment and upgrading of road junctions and footpaths.
 - provision of new footpaths and cycle lanes;
 - traffic calming measures and road drainage;
 - road signage from the Knocknarea walk/Sligo Rugby Club on the R-292 to the junction with Buenos Aires Drive;
 - road signage from the R-277/R-292 roundabout extending to the Promenade and to the Airport Road.
- D. Reconfigure the Council Car Park on Shore Road and increase the number of car parking spaces available, to facilitate the proposed public realm enhancement measures at the Promenade (refer to **Section 19.3.4 A**)
- E. Investigate the feasibility of a walking/cycling route from the Top Road to the Golf Club Road and Primary School. **[PA-64]**

19.3.6 Community facilities

- A. Require any development proposed on the greenfield site along the Airport Road to ensure the protection of adjoining designated natural heritage sites. Any proposed development should provide a range of facilities such as a citizens' advice point, social services, tourist information, skate park and indoor sports, youth centre and/or childcare facilities.

19.3.7 Tourism development

- A.** Provide appropriate pedestrian access along the R-292 from Carrowdough to the village, while retaining all existing stone walls, significant trees and hedgerows.

19.3.8 Business and enterprise

- A.** Support the continued operation of Sligo Airport. Any foreseeable demand for airport-related uses can be adequately met on the lands between the runway and the existing Business and Enterprise Park.
- B.** Protect existing flight paths, i.e., 'declared distances (published runway length) and runway end safety areas', as requested by the Northwest Airport Company Ltd.

Due regard will be had to airport safeguarding requirements when development proposals in the locality are being assessed. Applications requiring external lighting or floodlighting shall include details of lighting schemes, which will be expected to demonstrate that:

- i.** the lighting scheme proposed is the minimum required to undertake the task;
- ii.** there will be no dazzling or distraction of pilots landing aircraft on the nearby runway.